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ABSTRACT

Designed for teachers, administrators, and others involved in early childhood education, the guide presents a model for implementing parenting programs as part of early childhood education programs. Separate sections discuss the planning and implementation of a parenting program, the role of a parent coordinating council, utilizing volunteers, using the home for teaching, and making home visits. Guidelines are given for establishing an activity, book, and toy lending library. The final section offers specific guidelines for establishing a parent education model. The guide provides a number of sample forms, including a parent letter, sample survey, midyear assessment form, parent record tally, school-community profile form, and library attendance and circulation record. (LH)

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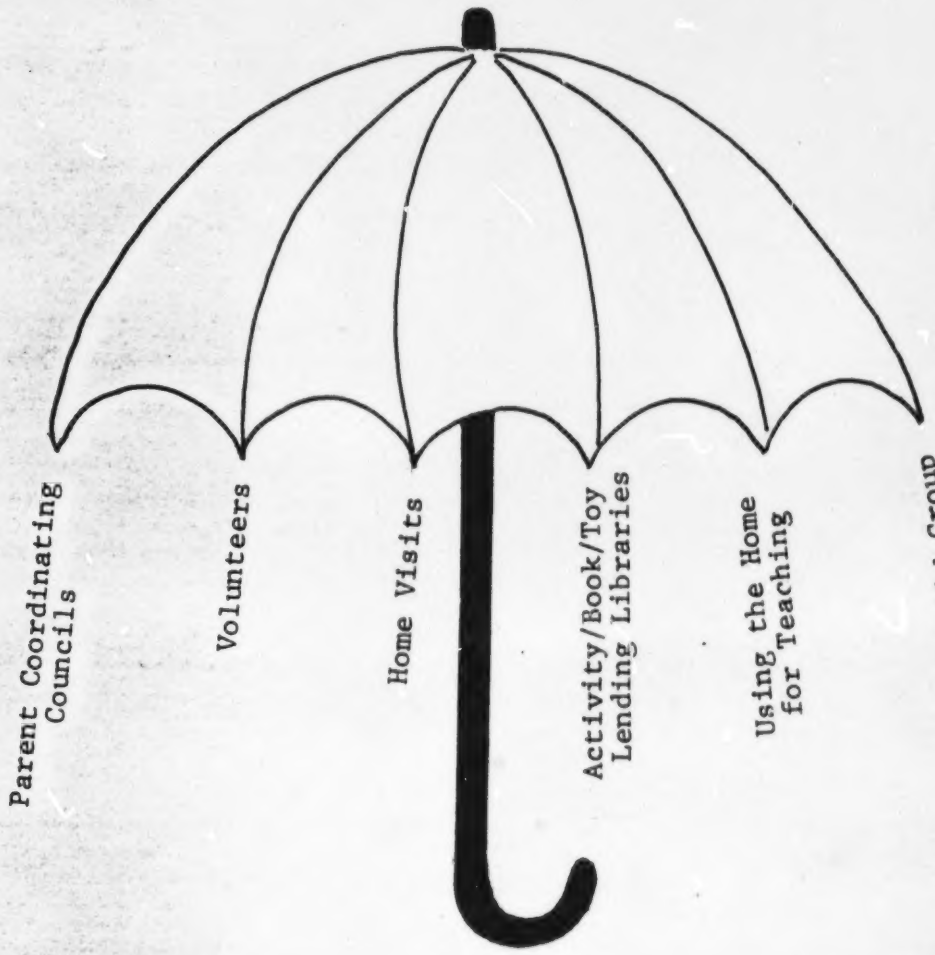
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

MODEL PARENTING PROGRAM



PS 013679

Maryland State Department of Education
Division of Compensatory, Urban, and
Supplementary Programs

The Early Childhood Education Branch
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

No. 1

THE EARLY CHILDHOOD MODEL

PARENTING PROGRAM

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DIVISION OF COMPENSATORY, URBAN, AND SUPPLEMENTARY PROGRAMS
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION BRANCH

JANUARY 1983

CONTENTS

No. 1 The Early Childhood Model Parenting Program

No. 2 Samples

- Parent Survey
- Midyear Assessment
- Parent Record Tally
- School Community Profile

No. 3 Parent Coordinating Council

No. 4 Volunteers: School Partners

No. 5 Using the Home for Teaching

No. 6 Home Visits

No. 7 Guidelines for Establishing an Activity, Book, and Toy Lending Library

No. 8 Guidelines for Establishing a Parent Education Parenting Model

SECTION I

Rationale

The most important factor influencing a child's learning is the home and family, research indicates. Support from the school can be provided to develop and strengthen relationships between home and school to help children develop and achieve at their optimal levels.

The Early Childhood Education Branch, Division of Compensatory, Urban, and Supplementary Programs is encouraging and supporting the development of model parenting program sites to serve the school and its parent population in specific locations in the state.

Initial Planning

The choice of sites is primarily based on space availability and staff commitment. Program success depends on the support and participation of teachers and administrators, parents, and service agencies.

It is essential to secure as early as possible administrative and staff consensus for working with parents.

Involve parents in planning the program. The amount of time necessary for parents and teachers to participate in open, honest dialogue will vary with individual school community situations. Parents can provide information about their children, as well as desired goals and expectations for them.

Invite input and cooperate with other agencies that provide service to children and families. Parents who deal with stressful or potentially stressful life situations need a kind of support that schools frequently

cannot provide. Agency representatives are usually quite willing to participate in relevant dialogue and share information about their program and services. In addition, dialogue should be initiated between all persons in the school who have responsibility for the school parenting thrust.

Implementing The Program

The message to parents regarding roles and responsibilities must be clear and consistent. Parents and staff should share responsibility for the programs. Review the previously identified needs in order to focus on one or more areas toward which to direct specific attention. Goals can only be achieved through specific objectives and program activities or strategies. Flexibility is paramount in implementing a program. Plans should be modified when unexpected situations arise. A number of strategies can be utilized to meet program goals and objectives. No one strategy will be appropriate for all programs or all parents.

Reaching The "Hard To Reach"

Anticipate in advance the possible need for modifying strategies to meet the needs of the "hard to reach families." Frequently, this is where the greatest needs exist. Recognize that in order for such families to respond they must have at least minimal skills in language, cognition, abstract reasoning, and interpersonal relationships. Such skills are minimal in some families. These, however, are the families we must reach.

How the hard-to-reach family is perceived can greatly affect work relationships. Start by examining attitudes about adults that seemingly function intellectually at a low level. Find out the circumstances affecting the situation, and then determine how these factors can influence progress

with the child and the parent.

Understanding attitudes and the family situation is helpful in rapidly adjusting strategies.

Offer these families services that go beyond those directly related to the child. A focus on the child-centered services often causes one to see parents only as "parents" and not as "people." Being willing to see "people" and not just "parents" or "problems" is a required first step.

- Meet the family at its present level of need, no matter how different its values or motivations may be.
- Develop obtainable goals and realistic expectations for change. This will decrease frustration for families and staff. Through interagency contact, help families meet their basic needs for food, shelter, medical care, and a sense of self-worth before focusing on the less basic needs for education, child development, and parenting skills.
- Try to be aware of personal expectations when working with special families. When expectations are realistic, they can motivate achievement; when they are not realistic, they can overwhelm and defeat.

Preparing The Environment

Inviting signs for parents should be visible near the school entrance as well as in sections specifically designated for parents. The establishment of a parent station, (2) parent center, and (3) parent lounges and/or parent room are excellent means of communicating to parents that they have a place in the school environment.

Colorful novelty signs could:

- Be very inviting, even if parents must first report to the office
- Let parents, community persons, state representatives, and children know instantly that this is a school where parents are welcome
- Lead to a specific place in the building; for example, the parent room
- Indicate specific programs that invite parental participation
- Encourage parent participation, in maintaining the bulletin board and signs

A parenting station will serve as a valuable way of informing and stimulating parental interest and strengthening the communication network. Establish the station in a place that is accessible or in full view of parents who enter or leave the classroom/building. A station can be developed utilizing:

- A corner of a classroom or hall
- A space on a wall, usually over a desk or table
- A table top
- A cardboard stand with pockets
- A chalk or bulletin board
- A movable rack or cart

Such a station could display:

- Community resource information
- Legislative issues and recommended action
- Newspaper clippings
- Volunteer activities
- Calendars of special events

. Daily Schedules

. Pictures of children, staff, and parents

. Parent exchange (transportation, babysitting, recipes, etc.)

. Information pertaining to nutrition, child development topics, etc.

. Seasonal information and decorations

. Classroom layouts, center, and curriculum experiences.

A parent lounge or parent room can also be identified as a parent center and can include one or more parent stations. Space permitting, such a center should be a cozy, inviting place with comfortable chairs, adequate lighting, tables and equipment for working and socializing.

. Encourage parents to participate in planning and maintaining the station and center

. Include color and variety in selection of furnishings

. Keep information current

. Encourage parents to assist in developing a simple procedure to determine whether information is being utilized.

SECTION II

Goal

To implement parenting as an integral part of selected early childhood education programs in Maryland.

Objectives

1. To develop a planned program of activities and experiences based on the needs of parents which will support and enhance the parental role as the principal influence in a child's development and educational progress.
2. To utilize a wide variety of parenting strategies and materials as vehicles for support to families.
3. To provide a visitation site for persons interested in developing, expanding, and refining parenting programs.

Activities

The choice of specific activities, plan for implementation, expected dates of completion, and anticipated results should be included in the planning process.

SECTION III

Benefits

The primary benefit is additional support for children, parents, families, teachers, and administrators.

Parents will play increasingly more active roles in the education of their children, both in and outside of the classroom.

The desired outcome is a planned program of activities and experiences based on identified needs of children and families.

Evaluation

Evaluation should be ongoing. Following are some suggestions for evaluation.

1. Were specific objectives accomplished?

   The documentation of meetings held, newsletters distributed, parent-staff conferences completed, and records of the results of such activities can be the means of verifying the successful completion of planned activities.

2. How effective was the program?

   Verbal or written parent and staff reactions to the program activities can provide information on the value of the program or individual activities.

3. What changes have been made?

   Student progress may be one dimension for evaluating the effectiveness of the parenting program. Other effects may be: parents' increased skills, parent-staff interaction, parent and staff attitudinal changes, and improved parent-child interactions.

A Suggested Planning Guide

Goal:

Objectives:

Activity	Projected Dates	Persons Responsible	Assessment and Evidence of Completion

The following have been identified as effective means of facilitating regular home-school communication

. newsletters

. telephone calls

. happy day notes

. letters to individual parents

. parent-teacher-child conference

. discussion groups

. classroom observation

. informal parent team meetings

Activities or strategies unique to specific LEAs can be identified through the utilization of parent survey and discussion sessions.

Technical Assistance

Technical assistance in the form of consultation, consultants, or inservice will be provided on an ongoing basis by the Maryland State Department of Education's Early Childhood Education staff. Actions may be initiated by the Maryland State Department of Education or the local education agency.

Documentation

Records indicating the extent and frequency of parent participation and type of participation will serve as valuable documentation for continuous program refinement and improvement. Such records would consist of at least the following.

- Parent survey - an interest and needs assessment completed by parents early in the school year to plan activities and workshops
- Midyear assessment - Assessment to be completed by parents in January or February to modify and improve the program.
- Parent record tally - a tally sheet to be completed by teachers periodically indicating the nature and frequency of home/school interactions.

SAMPLES

Dear Parent,

This school year we will plan ongoing activities and services to promote a Home/School Partnership. Your input in this planning process is extremely important. Please take a few minutes to share with us your feelings, ideas, interests, needs, and time by completing and returning the attached.

Sincerely,

Parent Survey

I. School _____ Grade level of your children

_____

_____

_____

How long have your children attended this school? _____

Do you have other young children? Yes ___ No ___ Ages ____

Do you feel free to contact your child's school? Yes ___ No ___

Do you regularly communicate with persons from your child's school? Yes ___ No. ___

What contacts have you had with persons from your child's school?

- Individual Conferences Yes ___ No ____
- PAC group (meeting) Yes ___ No ____
- PTA group (meeting) Yes ___ No ____
- Home visits Yes ___ No ____
- Newsletters and bulletins Yes ___ No ____
- Volunteer Training Yes ___ No ____
- As A Volunteer Yes ___ No ____
- Parent Inservice Yes ___ No ____
- Parent Discussion Group Yes ___ No ____

II. Would you like to participate in any of the following activities/services? (Please check)

Regular conferences with teacher	Yes _____	No _____
Conferences with others	Yes _____	No _____
Discussion about child development	Yes _____	No _____
Discussion about discipline	Yes _____	No _____
Discussion about other _____		
_____		
_____		
Informal meetings with other parents	Yes _____	No _____
Information and referral to community services or organization	Yes _____	No _____
Workshop meeting for Toy and Book Selection	Yes _____	No _____
Workshops - others _____		
_____		
_____		
Home visits by teachers	Yes _____	No _____
Training for classroom volunteering	Yes _____	No _____
Field Trips	Yes _____	No _____
Advocacy and Action	Yes _____	No _____
Newsletters for ideas and information	Yes _____	No _____
Repair Toys/equipment	Yes _____	No _____
Cut out and make materials for classroom use	Yes _____	No _____

III. I am interested in and would like more information about

EEEP _____

MSDE _____

Others _____

Please List _____

_____

The best time for me to attend meetings is

(Check One): Morning _____

Lunch Time _____

Afternoon _____

My participation might be limited because

I work _____

I need babysitter _____

I have no transportation _____

Other _____

Midyear Assessment

1. Do you feel that the staff is cooperative and helpful when you have a concern?

_____ always _____ sometimes _____ never

2. Are you satisfied with your child's learning program?

_____ always _____ sometimes _____ never

3. Do you feel welcome at our school?

_____ always _____ sometimes _____ never

4. Do you feel you know more about what is expected from your child in school than you did in September?

_____ yes _____ no

5. How often do you come to school?

_____ 3 times or more a week _____ 1-2 times a week

_____ seldom _____ never

6. Check the activities in which you have participated this year.

_____ parent education meetings

_____ classroom involvement

_____ making educational tasks

_____ PTA meetings

_____ parent teacher conferences

_____ observation of child in the classroom

7. Did you know the services available to our school?

- Home tutoring program
- College credit program for parents
- Morning day care program
- Counseling program

8. Have you completed a home learning task with your child?

_____ yes _____ no

COMMENTS: Please list ways we can be more supportive to you and your child.

PARENT RECORD TALLY

To be completed by teacher or parenting person

Child's Name _____

Grade _____

Phone Calls	Correspondence (Notes) (Letters)	Conferences	PTA Meetings	Informal Meetings Store Hall etc.	Walk Child Home	Home Visits	Toy and Book Lending	Volunteer in Classroom/School	Volunteer (Field Trip)	Other (Specify)

SAMPLE:

SCHOOL COMMUNITY PROFILE

Name of LEA | Local School Superintendent | Principal

Name of School (Include Number if Applicable)	Parenting Contact Person
Total School Pupil Enrollment	Total Parent Population (Estimate)

Identifying Information - School Programs and Services Available to Families

Service	Description	Person directly responsible	Population to serve

Community Services that Impact on Children and Families (Please list)

THE PARENT COORDINATING COUNCIL

A major step in developing a parenting program is the initiating of relevant dialogue among all persons in the school or connected with the school who have responsibility for the school parenting thrust.

Such persons could constitute a parent coordinating council and would include at least the PAC president, PTA president, and the school advisory council representative.

Initially these persons would work cooperatively to complete an informal school community survey designed to reveal the following pertinent information.

-Family member work patterns

-Number of single parent families or family composition

-Economic level of the community

-Previous extent of parent participation

-Activities parents have previously been involved in and at whose initiative

-School staff with parenting responsibility, special interest and commitment

-The extent of school commitment to parents

After completing the survey, this group would continuously work cooperatively to assure

-open communication between parents and staff

-effective monitoring and support programs

-positive public relations

-adequate meeting and workshop attendance

-appropriate evaluation, regrouping and plan for program improvement

-follow through on acceptable ideas and suggestions

-creativity and innovativeness in program implementation

In addition, a major emphasis of this group would be keeping parents aware of and positively involved in the legislative process. Utilization of this group would, in time, assure reaching each parent in some way.

VOLUNTEERS: SCHOOL PARTNERS

Volunteers may be parents, guardians, grandparents, aunts, uncles, senior citizens, retirees, brothers, sisters, community representatives and others who can provide services to the school without direct compensation. Maximum utilization of volunteers in the school program can expand and enhance the school services and cement the home school partnership. Such persons can serve as:

- Leaders or members of parenting groups
- Interpreters of family and community needs
- Interpreters of the school program
- Program planners
- Initiators and implementors of new ideas
- Teachers of children, classroom aides
- Teachers of other parents
- Special presenters of unique skills to children, staff and community
- Staff - toy and book lending program

Plan ahead

- Utilize persons for planning who believe volunteer programs are helpful, and can serve multiple purposes.
- Recruit specific volunteers because of skills needed.

Determine and list a range of opportunities that volunteer can be involved with or implement.

Plans for utilization of the varied skills and interests that volunteer can provide.

- Task expectations

. Supervision needed

. Staff responsibility

Plan meaningful experiences for persons who volunteer with less than minimal skills. The best volunteers become school advocates, and are unusually eager to participate in a comprehensive school program. Find a meaningful role for everyone.

The following are necessary prerequisites:

. Training - intensity and duration of training should be based on need and expected comprehensiveness of program.

. Utilization procedure - schedule optional assignments, i.e., in the classrooms, out of classrooms in designated areas.

Materials available and accessible

. Materials must be adequately matched with tasks.

USING THE HOME FOR TEACHING

Traditionally, the school staff has encouraged parents to reinforce the school curriculum at home. But without adequate support and assistance for parents, it does presuppose that parents are able to do this without the training required of teachers before they are permitted to teach. Parents can reinforce the classroom program only in terms of their understanding of the program and their own interests and abilities.

In implementing Parenting and the Curriculum, a major part of the efforts should be to have parents become so familiar with program goals and objectives that they will be able to use the home as a laboratory to enhance learning.

Tools, utensils, furniture, clothes, and practically any items in and around the home can become teaching aides for young children.

We can certify our belief in the home as the first institute of learning by sharing with parents realistic methods and procedures for becoming co-educators utilizing their domain, the home, as their major resource.

Help parents to recognize that

- they are a primary source for their child's training in language, social, and self-help skills, and in attitudes about learning
- language arts and thinking skills must begin at home
- the home can be a learning laboratory for the development of basic skills with young children

. marvelous opportunities for learning can be found in every room in the house

Indicate, illustrate, and discuss examples of the following:

1. Observing
2. Comparing
3. Classifying
4. Collecting and organizing data
5. Summarizing
6. Assumptions
7. Hypothesizing
8. Criticizing
9. Decision-making
10. Imagining
11. Interpreting
12. Including
13. Listening

Extend your examples to the maximum so that parents will realize that learning in the home is continuous and open-ended.

IN YOUR BEDROOM

Let your child:

1. name articles of clothing in the closet
2. match shoes and socks
3. sort clothes by color
4. help put his/her clothes away (socks in this drawer; pajamas in that drawer)
5. talk about daytime clothes and nighttime clothes
6. talk about clothes for hot and cold weather
7. talk about front and back of clothes
8. talk about the size of toys, books
9. put toys away by shape or color
10. find shapes--bed, pillows, windows, clock, etc.
11. count toys, blocks, books, etc.

IN YOUR KITCHEN

Let your child:

1. talk about the size, texture, and color of foods
2. measure with teaspoons, tablespoons, etc.
3. put cans and boxes in order according to size
4. find shapes; tea towels, cookie cutters, crackers, rolling pins, doors, windows, and clocks
5. name colors of common objects
6. sort utensils in a divided tray
7. sort and name foods after a trip to the grocery store
8. talk about smells
9. name machines and their uses--toaster, mixer, refrigerator, stove
10. count plates, glasses, forks, etc.
11. help set the table
12. find opposite--hot/cold, big/little, hard/soft
13. make a snack
14. wash fruits and vegetables

IN YOUR LIVING ROOM

1. talk about loud and soft sounds (radio, television, stereo)
2. develop his motor skills by--
   a. pushing a vacuum cleaner
   b. dusting
   c. sweeping
   d. mopping

3. find shapes--television, pillows, rugs, picture books, table tops, magazines, etc.

IN YOUR BATHROOM

Let your child:

1. use the mirror to name his/her body parts
2. feel different textures--cotton, soap, tissues, sponge
3. talk about opposite in the bathtub--
   a. hot/cold
   b. hard/soft
   c. full/empty
   d. float/sink
4. sort towels by color or shape
5. develop motor skills by--
   a. helping fold towels
   b. washing hands and face
   c. brushing teeth
   d. combing and brushing hair
6. talk about smells--toothpaste, perfume, after shave lotion, powder
7. identify common sounds--water running, toilet flushing, electric shaver

Courtesy of
Board of Education of Washington County

HOME VISITS

Good parent-teacher relationships are the results of many contacts between the home and the school in which the primary concern is to provide the best possible experience for children and then for parents. Such relationships do not just happen. Working with parents cooperatively and effectively requires a great deal of time and effort on the part of the teacher. School administrators must assume the responsibility for making this possible.

Home Visits

Teachers understand the children better by becoming acquainted with their families and homes. Often parents are asked to come to the school and yet little recognition is given to the need for the teacher to become acquainted with the child and parent in the home. Usually much can be gained by the teacher through seeing how families live and understanding how parents feel about sending their children to school. Two major reasons for visiting the home are to establish rapport and secure or provide information.

Home visits can have a number of positive benefits. They may:

Provide a setting for parent-staff interaction in which parents feel more comfortable

Permit the staff member to assess more adequately the needs and resources of the family that might never be known otherwise

Give tangible evidence of "reaching out" to the family

Provide opportunity for school staff to interact with other members of the family

Provide opportunity for staff to know of other family members home during the day who could participate regularly in the school volunteer program.

Use the first visit as a time to get acquainted and indicate your desire to work cooperatively with the parent during the school year.

Prepare for the visit by having your purpose in mind.

Give the family a brief interpretation of your purpose when the appointment is made.

Avoid accepting the prejudices of others; go with an open mind.

Be prompt and make the first visit brief.

Reiterate the nature of your visit upon arrival.

Speak to all present in the room.

Offer to come at another time if your arrival appears to be inconvenient.

Begin with positives about the child.

Show your interest by listening to the family.

Help parents see their own strengths.

Respect their privacy - don't bombard them with questions.

Model good relationship to the child; parents learn through observing.

Remember the purpose of your visit, but be flexible about other areas of concern.

Through observation and interaction with the family, a staff member may make some of the following assessments during a home visit:

Insight into feelings, interests and desires of family members

Expectations of the child's abilities as determined by parent and family members

Parental motivation and desire to effect change in their life styles

Resourcefulness and creativity of parents as determined by home environment.

Parental methods of interacting with child (tangible, tokens of praise)

Resources available - educational material, and cultural indicators

Immediately following a home visit, or upon returning to school it might be helpful to record specific information about your visit for future reference.

SAMPLES: Home Visitation Form

Teacher _____ Grade _____ Room _____

Name of Child: _____

Date of Visit: _____ Time: _____ p.m.

Name of Parent: _____

Remarks:

HOME VISITATION FORM

Name of Parent _____

Name of Child _____

Mailing Address _____

Location of Home _____

School _____

Date of Visit _____

Visit Requested By _____

Purpose of Visit _____

Signature of Person(s) Making Home Visits _____

Mileage From School to Home _____

Parent's Signature _____

Date _____

Remarks:

_____

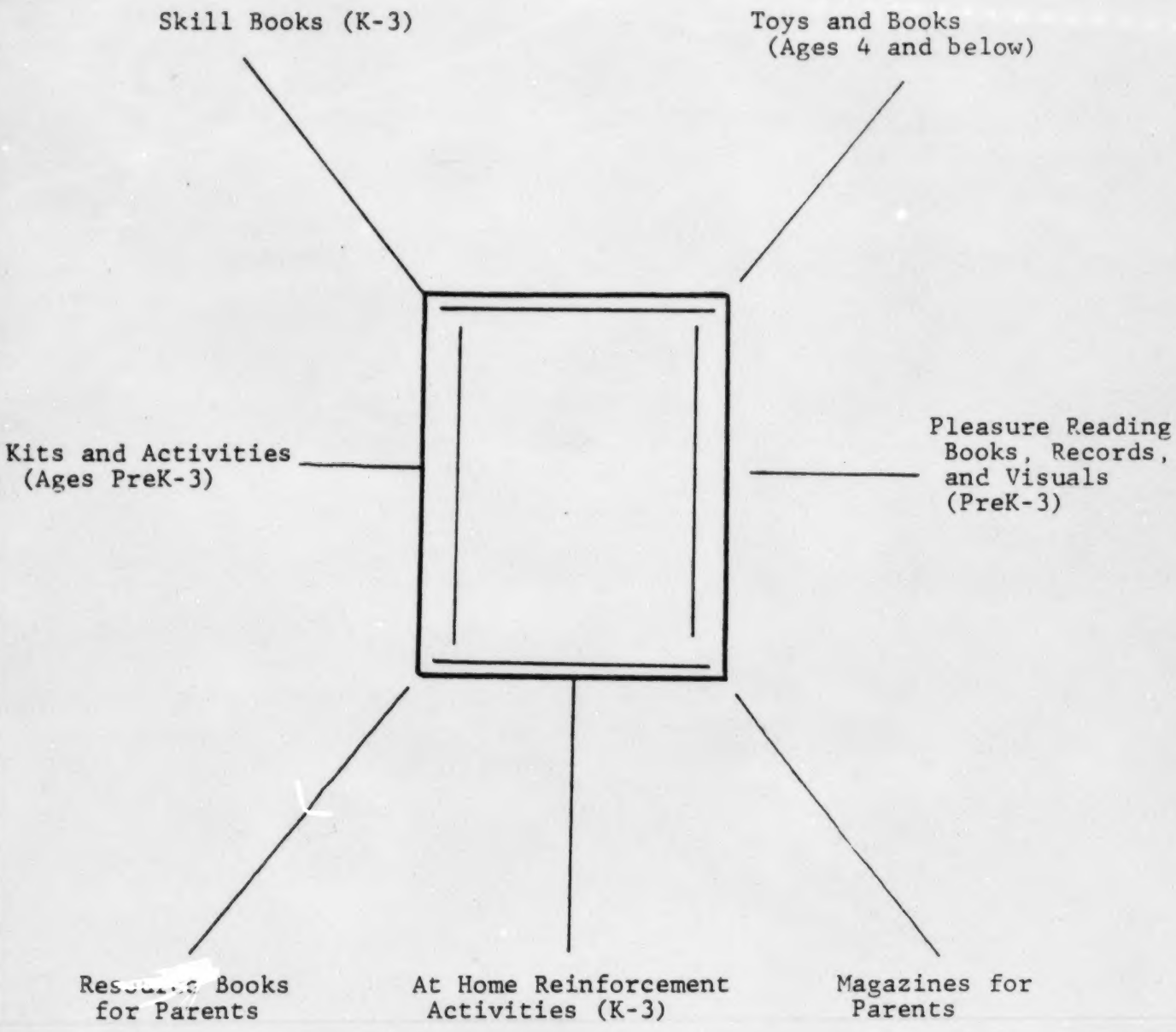
_____

_____

No. 7

ABT LENDING LIBRARIES

(Activity/Book/Toy)


Skill Books (K-3)
Toys and Books (Ages 4 and below)
Kits and Activities (Ages PreK-3)
Pleasure Reading Books, Records, and Visuals (PreK-3)
Books for Parents
At Home Reinforcement Activities (K-3)
Magazines for Parents

GUIDELINES FOR ESTABLISHING
AN ABT LENDING LIBRARY
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION MODEL

Procedures

Toys, books, and related activities can serve as a means of increasing communication at all levels between teacher and parent, parent and child, other siblings and family members.

Once the decision has been made to establish an activity, book, and toy lending library, the following strategies should be considered:

1. Look for available space

   The space must be accessible to staff, parents, and children, such as:

   . An extra classroom

   . A section of a room

   . A space in a hallway

   . A space in a section of the Media Center

   . A space in any office (i.e., resource teacher's, etc.)

2. What to provide in the space

   The amount of space available will determine the selection of the following display and storage materials.

   . Cabinets

   . Bins and/or large boxes

   . Tables, chairs

   . Shelves

   . Adequate lighting

3. Cataloging and distribution of materials

   Determine distribution procedures

. Number of items per person - consideration here should be given to the extensiveness of the collection

. Type of carryalls

Drawstring bags (heavy fabric--muslin, denim, canvas)

Mesh net bags

Plastic bags - baggies

Cans for puzzles

Heavy duty envelopes

Criteria for the selection of toys, books, and activities should be based on the needs of the users. Specifically, select items that reinforce, extend, supplement, and enhance the curriculum offerings, and that are safe.

Items (toys, books, and activities) should be introduced to the parent or persons who will be using them with the child. For example, explain the reason why a certain book, manipulative toy, or activity will add dimensions to the child's classroom experiences, enjoyment, and understandings.

4. Circulation

Determine circulation time (i.e., one week - two weeks, etc.)

The following are examples of cards that include necessary information for cataloging and implementing a circulation system.

Example: Activity entitled "Picture Cards Alike and Not Alike"

Picture Cards-Alike and Not Alike

Name of Activity _____

Name _____

School _____ Curriculum Code _____

Issued To	Date Issued	Return Date

Example of Skill Card for Activity Picture Cards -- Alike and Not Alike

Picture Cards-Alike and Not Alike

Skill - to develop awareness of size concepts.

Objective - To introduce concept of size; same and different

1. Introduce several cards of the "same size."
   a. Show the cards, one at a time, to familiarize the children with the subject matter.
   b. As each card is shown, make sure the child can recognize that the matched pair of animals are the same size.
   c. Repeat the process as many times as necessary. This process provides a foundation for identification purposes and vocabulary development.
2. Introduce several cards of "different sizes"
   a. Show the cards, one at a time, to familiarize the child or the children with the subject matter. Have each child or group identify the animal.
   b. As each card is shown, make sure the child can recognize the difference in size between the two animals on the card.
   c. Repeat this process as many times as necessary. This process offers a system by which to compare the size of the animal.

   After sufficient practice, proceed to next level.

In addition, an attendance and circulation record kept over a

period of time will be useful when evaluating the program. The following information can be used for future program planning and as an indicator of the success of the library.

a. What are the most popular items and why?

b. Who is being served?

Example:

TOY, BOOK, AND ACTIVITY LIBRARY ATTENDANCE AND CIRCULATION RECORD

Month	Total Attendance		Circulation					New Patrons	
	Adults	Children	Books	Toys	Activity	Adults	Children	Adults	Children
March									
April									
May									
June									

5. Who will run the program?

The toy, book, activity lending library can initially be established and operated by the Teacher Coordinator and Media Specialists. Individual parents or parent groups can be trained to assist and/or manage the continuous implementation.

GUIDELINES FOR TOYS

Consideration for toy selection should be based on program goals, objectives, skill development and school based curriculum.

Toys should vary according to increasing complexity. When making toy selections, consider the following questions.

1. Design

- Is the shape of the toy related to its function?
- Is the color used as a tool, not as a useless decoration? (That is, does it relate directly to the design and function of the toy?)
- Is the toy simple in design and are there multiple ways to use it?

- If there is a mechanism involved, is it visible to the child and does it work properly to show a simple procedure?

2. Durability

- Is the toy well constructed of a solid material?
- Is it structurally insulated against breakage?
- Are replacement parts available for the toy?
- Can it be useful without all its parts?

3. Safety

- Is the toy constructed out of materials that can be washed and cleaned, if necessary?
- Is it nonflammable?
- Has it been checked for safety?

GUIDELINES FOR BOOKS

Initial consideration for book selection should be based on program goals, objectives, skill development and school based curriculum. Books should be varied according to increasing complexity. In addition, consideration should be given to a diversified selection of books from a variety of categories, such as:

- Books for story telling
- Books for developing concepts - colors, numbers, shapes and sizes
- Picture books
- Books without words
- Play and activity books
- Books for parents of children

The following questions might be considered:

1. Are books provided that
   - cover a wide range of difficulty in order to meet the needs of children and reflect the child's environment and culture as well as other groups?
   - reflect the child's individual interests?
   - encourage the understanding of feeling as well as challenge the mind?

Toy and book selection should be oriented toward the development of concepts and skills such as:

. Color matching, identification, and naming

. Matching, naming, and identifying shapes

. Recognition of letters

. Numerical concepts and problem solving

. Relational concepts

. Sensory concepts

. Verbal communication and comprehension

. Visual and auditory discrimination

. Vocabulary expansion

. Basic skills extension

GUIDELINES FOR ACTIVITIES

Initial consideration for activity selection should be based on program goals, objectives, skill development and school-based curriculum. Activities should be varied according to increasing complexity. In addition, consideration should include the following questions:

a. Are activities used by children to work out the ideas presented to them in the classroom and real life?

b. Does the activity expand a child's vocabulary and word comprehension as part of preparation for reading?

c. Does the activity use concrete examples?

d. Does the activity enhance the skills presented by the toys and books?

e. Is the activity clear with specific directions?

f. Is the activity colorful with small increasing steps of complexity?

GUIDELINES FOR ESTABLISHING A PARENT EDUCATION PARENTING MODEL

Procedures

Parent education sessions increase parenting skills. Parent education sessions can assist in the amelioration of parental stress, develop and increase skills and provide support relationships that assist in meeting some of the following parental needs:

1. Need to be accepted as parents
2. Need to build identification with others who have like needs and desires
3. Need for someone who will listen with an empathetic ear. (Lane, Mary B. Education for Parenting, National Association for the Education of Young Children, Washington, D.C., 1975)

Once the decision has been made to establish parent education sessions, the following strategies should be considered:

1. Survey the parent population to find out the following:
   - topics of interest
   - most appropriate time and day to meet
   - how often the sessions will occur, i.e., weekly bi-weekly, or monthly
   - how long each session will be
   - how many sessions will be offered
2. Select an appropriate place to have the sessions. Consideration should be given to the following questions:

. Is the place easily accessible by parents and staff?

. Is the place warm and inviting? Coffee and snacks, comfortable chairs, colorful and informative bulletin boards and a variety of printed materials for parents will provide a pleasant place for meetings.

3. Involve parents in the planning of the sessions.

. A committee of parents and staff should be formed to assist in the planning of the program. The parameters of the program can be defined by the committee using the results of the survey.

. All decisions concerning logistics should be decided by the committee.

. Consideration can be given to deciding whether an award such as a certificate is to be given at the conclusion of the sessions and to whom (i.e., all participants, perfect attendance or different certificate for different standards met).

4. Arrange the topics and choose resources:

. The results of the survey will yield topic areas to be presented.

. The first meeting (the planning meeting) should occur about a month before the regular session begins.

. The parent group can define the specific topics based on the areas identified in the survey.

. During the planning meeting the parents can be given a list of topic areas. From the list, the parenting

coodinator of the project can elicit the specific topics parents want presented. For example, if the group is interested in discipline, it will be necessary to know the age levels of their children. It may be necessary to have several presentors to discuss the discipline techniques appropriate to the age groupings of infants, toddlers, preschoolers, primary age children, middle childhood, preadolescents and adolescents.

. Once the specific topics have been identified, resources and materials are identified to present the topics.

. The calendar outlining the sessions is distributed to the parents.

5. Evaluate the program:

. The expected outcomes (objectives) will determine the methods to be used in the evaluation of the project.

. Baseline data should be collected in order to measure the success of the project. Some of the following suggestions may be useful:

. Number and percent of parent population returning the survey.

. Number and percent of parent population that agreed to participate in the sessions. (Initial sessions usually yield small percentages).

. The attitudes of parents toward children and school before and after the parent education sessions.

. The attitudes of staff toward parents before and after the sessions.

. Records of parent involvement in the classrooms and school before, during and after the project.

. Records of teacher contacts to parents before, during and after the project (See parent record form).

. Design assessment sheets to assess the effectiveness of each session as well as assess the effectiveness of the group of sessions.

6. Ascertain from the participants the type of follow-up they would like to have, such as:

. Monthly rap sessions

. Additional training sessions - what and when, etc.

The following information from the Minnesota Parent Education program research, a seven year program, may serve program designers in setting realistic expectations for the parent education project. Even though the research was compiled during the 1930's, it is the most detailed information available on parent education programs.

1. Survey of the program

. The average number of members enrolled per group for the entire program was 25.7.

. The average attendance per meeting was 15.

. Mothers tended to join groups studying children of the same age as their own children.

. About 19% of the mothers who enrolled in study groups never returned for a second meeting. Illness and conflicting engagements were the reasons most often given for not returning to the sessions.

. Two weeks was the most favored interval between meetings.

. Attendance was slightly better in groups that met weekly.

. The most common meeting length was an hour and a half.

. Early afternoon was the most favored time of day for meetings, late afternoon was second in preference.

. Morning groups ranked first in the amount of discussion and late evening groups last.

. Amount of discussion varied with the topic under consideration and the general cultural level of the group.

. Percentage of attendance and amount of discussion varied with the individual leader. The same leaders were not equally acceptable to all groups.

. Groups beginning in the winter months had the largest enrollment and the largest average attendance.

. Groups beginning in the spring and summer months had the highest percentage of attendance.

. Attendance in rural groups was consistently higher than urban groups.

. Members of rural groups had less education and were somewhat older than the urban groups.

2. Recommendations for Future Programs

. Systematic, accurate records from the start have immense value when the time comes to estimate the results of a program.

. If the program is to be satisfactory to all sections of the population, adaptability as well as training must be a prerequisite for leaders. An assortment of leaders

bringing varied experience and training will make it possible to suit the leader to the group.

. Since there is a tendency for a considerable percentage of persons to come to the first meeting of the group and never return, it is very important that the leader be familiar with the probable cultural level of the group, so that the subject matter given at this first meeting is neither too familiar nor too difficult.

. Parents are most interested in learning about children at the period of development that their own children have reached. It is, therefore, wise to offer subject matter dealing with successive stages of child development.

. Mothers should be encouraged to organize morning groups whenever possible.

. If funds are available, small circulating libraries and free correspondence courses are a valuable supplement to study group work.

3. Inferences

. The accumulation of factual material is for informational purposes only. This material should not detain development of a parent education program.

. If twenty-five persons enrolled in a parent education program, fifteen of them will be present at each meeting.

. Approximately one member out of five will attend one meeting and never return.

. Approximately one member out of five will enroll in a second group.

. Knowledge of the organization sponsoring the group, or the neighborhood in which the school or church is located, enables the leader to suit the subject matter to the cultural level of the group.

. There is little difference in choices as to meeting interval or time of day. These factors can well be left to the convenience of the members. On the whole, however, it seems probable that morning is an especially desirable time from the standpoint of attendance and discussion.

. A strong local organization behind the movement can promote the development of parent education in a given community to a marked degree.

. Other activities, such as reading courses and radio talks, can be expected to reach about the same type of persons as those who come to study groups.

(Edith A. Davis and Esther McGinnis, Parent Education: A Survey of the Minnesota Program, Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1939)

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